FOREST PLAN REVISION
WILDERNESS EVALUATION

Updated 6/25/2017

PROCESS OVERVIEW

Inventory — COMPLETED (Step 1:)

Identify areas that MAY have wilderness characteristics:

⇒ Area must not have substantially noticeable improvements .

⇒ Area must be greater than 5,000 acres, or less than 5,000 but contiguous to existing wilderness, primitive areas, administratively recommended wilderness, etc.

Evaluation — WE ARE HERE (Step 2:)

The primary function of the evaluation step is to evaluate, pursuant to criteria set forth in the Wilderness Act of 1964, the wilderness characteristics of the lands included in the inventory. All lands included in the inventory must be evaluated.

Analysis — NEXT STEP (Step 3:)

Based on the evaluation and input from public participation opportunities, the Responsible Official shall identify which specific units, or portions of units, from the Evaluation to carry forward in one or more alternatives in the plan EIS.

Recommendation (Step 4:)

The Responsible Official shall document a decision on whether to recommend specific areas for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System or as a Wilderness Study Area based on the analysis disclosed in the applicable NEPA document and input received during public participation opportunities (sec. 70.61).

This decision must be included in the final decision document for the plan.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

During the Fall 2018 Review Period the Forest is seeking feedback on

- The Draft Wilderness Evaluation Report *and*
- How to identify units for further consideration during Analysis

Complete a Wilderness Evaluation Comment Form during the Open House or send your comments to the Forest by November 9, 2018.

To submit comments you can send comment forms to the Plan Revision Team at mlnfplanrevision@fs.fed.us; or postal mail at 599 West Price River Drive, Price, Utah 84501.

To view draft documents visit the "Fall 2018 Review Period" page on our website https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/mantilasal/landmanagement/planning

The outcome of the Evaluation (Step 2) is a report documenting the presence of Wilderness Characteristics in areas identified during the Inventory (Step 1).

Wilderness Evaluation Criteria Definitions

Chapter 70 of the Forest Service Land Management Planning Handbook 1909.12 outlines criteria for evaluation of lands for Wilderness characteristics. View the draft Evaluation Summary or draft Process Paper for more information on how wilderness characteristics were evaluated.

Criterion 1: Apparent Naturalness

This criterion evaluates the degree to which an area generally appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprints of man's work substantially unnoticeable.

Question 1a. *What is the composition of plant and animal communities?* The purpose of this question is to determine if plant and animal communities appear substantially unnatural .
Question 1b. What is the extent to which the area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention?
Question 1c. What is the extent to which improvements included in the area represent a departure from apparent naturalness?

Criterion 2- Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or a Primitive and Unconfined Type of Recreation

This criterion evaluates the degree to which the area has outstanding opportunities for solitude or for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. An area only has to possess one or the other; the area does not have to possess outstanding opportunities for both elements, nor does it need to have outstanding opportunities on every acre.

Question 2a. Consider impacts that are pervasive and influence a visitor's opportunity for solitude within the evaluated area.
Question 2b. Consider the opportunity to engage in primitive-type or unconfined recreation activities that lead to a visitor's ability to feel a part of nature. *Note: Examples of primitive-type recreation activities include observing wildlife, hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, fishing, hunting, floating, kayaking, cross-country skiing, camping, and enjoying nature.*

Criterion 3- Unique and Outstanding Qualities

This criterion evaluates the degree to which the area may contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value. These values are not required to be present in an area for the area to be recommended for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, but their presence should be identified and evaluated where they exist.

When evaluating unique and outstanding qualities, consider if the feature is iconic, unique at a regional or national scale, and the extent that the feature defines how people think about and value the area.

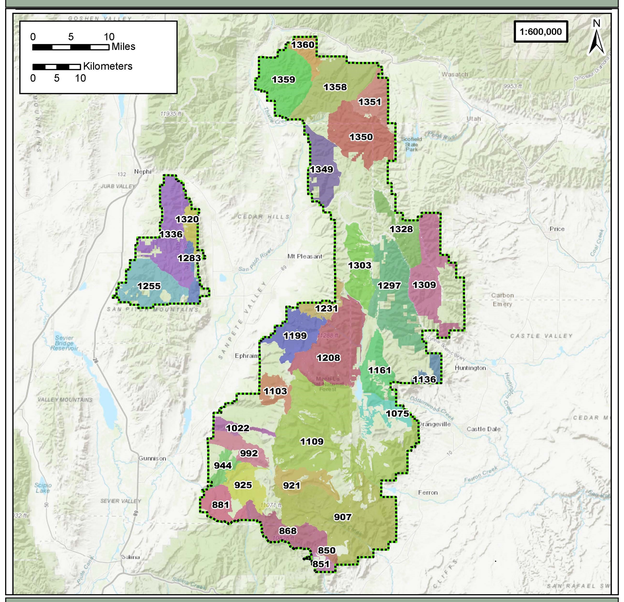
Question 3a. Does the area contain rare plant or animal communities or rare ecosystems? *Note: Rare in this context is defined as national or regional in scale.*
Question 3b. Are there any outstanding landscape features such as waterfalls, mountains, viewpoints, waterbodies, or geologic features?
Question 3c. Are there historic and cultural resource sites in the area of regional or national significance? *Consider if the feature is nationally recognized (for example, through an official designation such as the National Register) or if the features is considered a priority heritage asset.*
Question 3d. Are there any research natural areas?
Question 3e. Are there any high quality water resources or important watershed features?

Criterion 4: Manageability

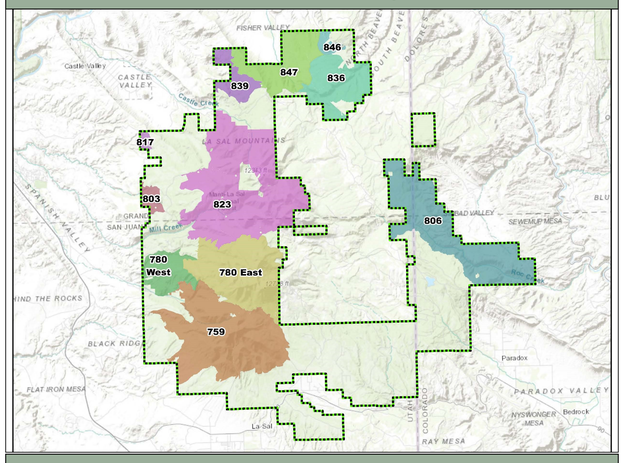
This criterion evaluates the degree to which the area may be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics, considering current conditions.

Question 4a. Can the area be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics? *Describe factors that are not compatible with managing for wilderness character.*

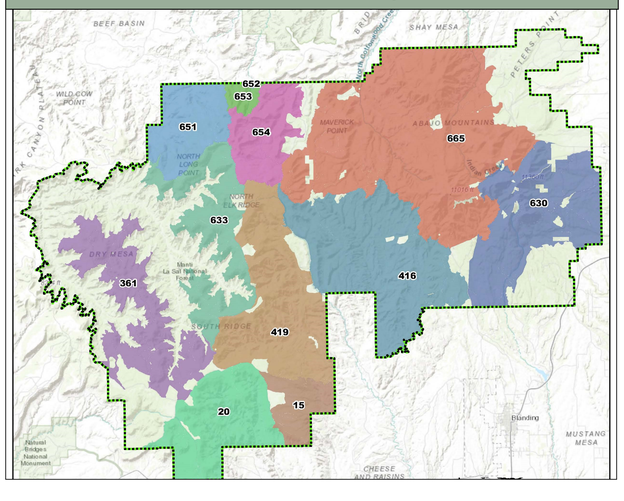
Ferron/Price and Sanpete Ranger Districts
Evaluation Unit Map



Moab Ranger District
Evaluation Unit Map



Monticello Ranger District
Evaluation Unit Map



ASSIGNING UNIT VALUES

Wilderness Characteristic Value

The Manti-La Sal National Forest defined values of High, Moderate, Low, or No to help document and evaluate the presence of each Wilderness Characteristic:

- Criteria of Apparent Naturalness
- Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Recreation
- Outstanding or Remarkable Values
- Manageability

Overall Unit Value

Based on feedback received during the Feb 2018 Review Period, the draft evaluation narratives and characteristic values were revised and a method was developed to create a final overall Evaluation Unit Value of High, Moderate, Low, or No.

The overall unit value, rather than average each characteristic equally, uses a weighting system to place additional emphasis on criteria that mattered most to the public and cooperating agencies including the presence of infrastructure, a component of Apparent Naturalness, and Manageability.

NEXT STEP

Step 3 — Analysis

The next step in the wilderness process is Analysis.

During Analysis (Step 3), the Forest reviews the findings of the Evaluation (Step 2) documented in the Draft Wilderness Evaluation Report, and public comments received throughout the Evaluation process to identify which units, or portions of units, to bring forward for further Analysis as part of the range of alternatives in the Draft Revised Forest Plan's Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

The Forest Supervisor could elect not to carry areas forward into the Forest Plan alternatives based on information in the Evaluation and public input. If areas identified in the Evaluation are not included in the Draft Forest Plan EIS range of alternatives, rationale will be documented and made available for public review.

REFERENCE MATERIALS

For additional information on the process, and the criteria used during the Wilderness Evaluation, reference FSH 1909.12—LAND MANAGEMENT PLANNING HANDBOOK CHAPTER 70— WILDERNESS.

To view the progress on the Manti-La Sal's Wilderness Evaluation process, download draft documents or maps, or Chapter 70 referenced above - visit the Plan Revision Website here and click on the "Wilderness" link on the main page

https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/mantilasal/landmanagement/